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Security Council

Seventy-second year

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New York

President:	Mr. Skoog	(Sweden)
Members:	Bolivia (Plurinational State of)	Mr. Llorentty Soliz
	China	Mr. Shen Bo
	Egypt	Mr. Aboulatta
	Ethiopia	Ms. Guadey
	France	Mr. Lamek
	Italy	Mr. Cardi
	Japan	Mr. Okamura
	Kazakhstan	Mr. Sadykov
	Russian Federation	Mr. Iliichev
	Senegal	Mr. Barro
	Ukraine	Mr. Yelchenko
	United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland	Mr. Rycroft
	United States of America	Mr. Klein
	Uruguay	Mr. Rosselli

Agenda

The situation in Somalia

Report of the Secretary-General on Somalia (S/2017/21)

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The meeting was called to order at 10.20 a.m.

Adoption of the agenda

The agenda was adopted.

The situation in Somalia

Report of the Secretary-General on Somalia (S/2017/21)

The President: In accordance with rule 37 of the Council's provisional rules of procedure, I invite the representative of Somalia to participate in this meeting.

On behalf of the Council, I welcome His Excellency Mr. Abdusalam Hadliyeh Omer, Minister for Foreign Affairs and Investment Promotion of the Federal Republic of Somalia.

In accordance with rule 39 of the Council's provisional rules of procedure, I invite the following briefers to participate in this meeting: Mr. Michael Keating, Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Somalia and Head of the United Nations Assistance Mission in Somalia; Mr. Francisco Caetano Jose Madeira, Special Representative of the Chairperson of the African Union Commission for Somalia and Head of the African Union Mission in Somalia; and Ms. Asha Gelle Dirie, founder and Executive Director of the Asha Gelle Foundation.

The Security Council will now begin its consideration of the item on its agenda.

I wish to draw the attention of Council members to document S/2017/21, which contains the report of the Secretary-General on Somalia.

I now give the floor to Mr. Keating.

Mr. Keating: We meet at an auspicious moment, at the conclusion of an extended and exhaustive parliamentary electoral process and just 12 days before the election of a new President. We also meet at a time when Al-Shabaab is doing everything it can to discredit and disrupt the process, as we are seeing in Mogadishu and in the attack in Kulbiyo today. Allow me to extend my deepest condolences to the families of the soldiers and civilians whose lives have been lost.

An immediate priority is to ensure that the date set by the Joint Federal Election Committee for the presidential vote is adhered to. The date has been set on technical grounds, and pressures to change it on political grounds should be resisted. It is also essential that the last stage of this process be conducted transparently, according to the rules that have been agreed and that have been designed to ensure a free and fair election. All candidates must honour the provisions of the code of conduct they signed when registering their candidacy.

This is particularly important because the parliamentary stage of the process was marred by several instances of malpractice, including bribery and vote-buying, harassment and intimidation, and manipulation as well as repeated and protracted delays. Some were high-profile and egregious, though the majority of contests were correctly conducted. They were widely watched, including through social media.

The electoral process has held up a mirror to Somalis in which they have seen the good and the bad regarding how power is exercised, the relationship between elders, clan power brokers, politicians, business, ordinary citizens, women and men. They do not like everything they have seen, least of all the levels of corruption and the absence of institutions that can ensure legal and financial accountability.

Many important lessons have been learned. The ad hoc electoral bodies have done a remarkable job, but had difficulties withstanding political pressure, threats and inducements. The electoral timetable was subject to repeated delays, often because the process was used to try to resolve very long-standing disputes between clans, states and other actors.

The point is that the process was essentially a political one, used for inter- and intra-clan negotiations and reconciliation, and should be in part evaluated as such. The electoral features were essential, as they set the stage for the move to universal suffrage.

These lessons must be addressed in planning the one-person, one-vote elections scheduled for 2020. The National Independent Electoral Commission needs to be empowered, a voter registry established and a robust legal mechanism put in place to adjudicate disputes and sanction abusive behavior. Efforts in this regard must begin as soon as the electoral process concludes.

Despite the problems it has faced, the process has had very encouraging outcomes and marks an important milestone in Somalia's evolution and post-conflict transformation. An Upper House has come into existence, its 54 members chosen on a federal State rather than a clan basis. This embodiment of the

emerging federal character of Somalia could play a central role in advancing a genuinely national agenda.

The number of voters has significantly increased. The electorate was expanded from 135 men in 2012 to more than 13,000 individuals, 30 per cent of whom are women. Almost a quarter of the members of Parliament are now women, a truly remarkable achievement and the result of an effective political mobilization supported by the United Nations and the international community and some Somali leaders.

There has been genuine electoral competition. Voting took place in six locations around the country, again reflecting emerging federal State structures. The new Parliament is younger, more diverse and likely to be more responsive to the electorate than the previous one. In short, this Parliament is more legitimate and representative than any since the last elections were held, in 1969.

And despite the horrendous attack by Al-Shabaab on a hotel used by parliamentarians in Mogadishu only two days ago, terrorists have been unable to derail the electoral process. This in and of itself is an important message. Mogadishu will remain an unusually target-rich environment until the presidential election is concluded, another reason why the schedule should not be allowed to slip.

Let me pay tribute here also to the African Union Mission in Somalia (AMISOM) and to the Somali security and intelligence forces for protecting electoral sites around the country. They deserve great credit for fulfilling a dangerous job in very difficult circumstances.

The election of a President accepted as legitimate by the population and by the international community will set the stage for Somalia to tackle the serious challenges ahead. However, if voting for the next President is not secret or seen as compromised by corruption, coercion or external interference, then the country could face a protracted period of uncertainty.

This is the last thing Somalia needs. Somalis expect and deserve an administration that will address a number of urgent priorities. Many of these are on the agenda of the presidential candidates, including the incumbent. Let me name four: reform of the security sector; acceleration of the constitutional review; reconciliation and the resolution of many festering conflicts around the country; and strengthening governance, at both the centre and locally, both to generate revenues and provide services.

Unfortunately, there is also a fifth, urgent priority: responding to the current drought. Five million people are estimated to be in need around the country, from Somaliland and Puntland in the north to coastal areas in the centre and Jubaland in the south. An estimated 320,000 children under 5 are acutely malnourished. Coping capacities have been eroded to the point of collapse.

The drought response plan seeks $864 million, $300 million of which is required in the first quarter of this year. The Famine Early Warning System Network reports that famine is now looming and that urgent action to ramp up assistance and ensure access is needed to mitigate the potential for a large-scale loss of life. The drought also has serious political and security implications. It is exacerbating competition for resources such as water and intensifying local conflicts. The number of displaced persons is visibly growing. Reports and images of malnutrition are circulating on social media.

The perceived inability of the federal and local governments to respond will damage their legitimacy and will be exploited by Al-Shabaab. The drought is being cited by Somaliland as a key factor in postponing its elections from March until October. Revenues from the livestock trade are dropping, and financial resources committed to drought response will impact public and security-sector payroll commitments. In a nutshell, failure to support the drought response could halt and even undermine the pursuit of key State-building and peacebuilding objectives.

Security-sector reform must not be delayed or derailed. The prospects for peace and stability depend upon Somalis assuming greater political and financial responsibility for their own security. A plan for achieving this is urgently required.

AMISOM and the troop-contributing countries, as they have made clear, will not stay forever. Their presence has been and remains indispensable to securing Somalia, to creating the space for the federal State-building project and to protecting the elections. They will not stay unless the immediate funding issues are addressed and unless they believe that there is a credible plan whereby the Somali security forces and police are able to hold those areas that have been liberated from Al-Shabaab.

The 20 per cent cut in the European Union's (EU) generous support for the African Union (AU) in Somalia is a source of great concern. AMISOM funding needs to be put on a sustainable and predictable basis. I urge the Council to review the options for doing this, including the use of assessed contributions. The Special Representative of the Chairperson of the African Union Commission for Somalia will no doubt address the Council on these matters, including the need for immediate support for the planned offensive against Al-Shabaab.

But even as the financial problem is addressed, the larger issue of sustainable security in Somalia remains, given additional urgency by the stated intention of several troop-contributing countries to leave. Key to this will be building Somali national security forces, whether army, police, maritime or intelligence, that reflect the emerging federal State; that are trusted by all Somalis and not seen as monopolized by certain clans; that are accountable to the political leadership; and that are affordable.

Years of investment by the international community have yielded limited results. Al-Shabaab is degraded but remains a potent threat. One reason is that the approach to security has in the past been largely military and operational. That is of course essential, but not enough.

The imperative for the incoming President and Government is to reach a political agreement among Somalis regarding the architecture, ownership, funding and purpose of the security forces as the basis for more coherent and coordinated international support by the international community, notably the African Union, the United Nations and its partners. I hope the necessary elements can be put in place by the time of the next high-level conference on Somalia, scheduled to take place in London in May.

The African Union and the United Nations are committed to working closely together with major investors, the broader international community and the new Somali Administration on a comprehensive approach to security. That effort must draw upon the respective capacities and strengths of the key stakeholders, whether in funding and supporting AMISOM, building Somali national security forces, establishing and extending the rule of law and State authority at the local level or preventing and countering violent extremism.

Sustainable security and Somalia's sovereignty require a reduction in its heavy financial dependence upon the outside world, as well as success in raising domestic revenues for the provision of public goods, including the rule of law and security. The international financial institutions have a critical role to strengthen financial management capacities and accountability mechanisms.

Another priority is the resumption of the constitutional review process to address critical outstanding political issues. Those include the delineation of responsibilities between the President and the Prime Minister and between the Upper House and the House of the People, as well as between the respective roles and responsibilities of the Federal Government and the Federal member states in a range of areas, including resource- and revenue-sharing, the judicial system and the road map towards one-person, one-vote elections. The agreement reached between the Federal Government and member states on policing sets a good precedent; it now needs to be implemented.

The constitutional review process is all the more meaningful now that the Federal map of Somalia is complete, with the creation of Hir-Shabelle in November. The electoral process has put into sharp relief the many unresolved disputes and conflicts around the country. The most high profile are between Somaliland and Somalia, and the dispute in Galkayo, but there are at least half a dozen others, any one of which has the potential to turn violent at great human and political cost. My Somali interlocutors have made it clear that they want the United Nations, working with its AU, EU and Intergovernmental Authority on Development partners, to focus on building Somali capacities to prevent and resolve conflicts and to support reconciliation processes. Grounding that political process in the rule of law, with a strong and constructive role by the new Parliament, could be one of the strongest guarantors of long-term stability and durable governance reform in Somalia.

Ordinary Somalis must benefit from our collective efforts. Significant work remains to be done to improve the country's dismal human rights situation. I am particularly concerned by the plight of children affected by armed conflict and the unacceptable incidence of abduction and forced recruitment by Al-Shabaab. The majority of its militants consist of children deliberately targeted in communities and areas under Al-Shabaab's control. I would like to add my voice to that of Secretary-

General Guterres, as he highlighted in his recent report (S/2016/1098) on children and armed conflict, to speak out against that alarming situation.

As requested by the Security Council, the United Nations family has started a review of its presence in Somalia, with a view to supporting the next political cycle and, in particular, to addressing the priorities I have just outlined. I would like to mention that, given the postponements of the electoral process, the review will obviously not be completed by the end of this month. However, we intend to engage with the new Government as soon as possible and to revert to the Council in the coming months.

Allow me to conclude by thanking members of the Council for their unified position on Somalia and the support that I and my Office are receiving from them. As I have said before, progress in Somalia is fragile and reversible, and fraught with complexity. But the stage is gradually being set for Somalia to move to a new phase in sustaining peace, preventing and resolving violent conflict and building a functional, Federal State. Ultimately, it is the Somalis who will determine their own fate — but the Council's support is central to their chances of success.

The President: I thank Mr. Keating for his briefing.

I now give the floor to Mr. Madeira.

Mr. Madeira: On behalf of the Chairperson of the African Union Commission, Ms. Nkosazana Dlamini-Zuma, and of Ambassador Ismail Chergui, Commissioner for Peace and Security, who were unable to come here today because of the ongoing African Union (AU) Summit, I warmly greet you, Mr. President, and all members of the Security Council.

Since my previous briefing to the Council (see S/PV.7778) there have been important and encouraging political and security developments in Somalia. Despite enormous and multiple challenges, Somalis have defied the odds and completed their parliamentary election. A new, bicameral Federal Parliament is now in place in Somalia as a result of a highly disputed and engaging electoral process. The presidential election is scheduled to take place on 8 February, as announced. The African Union and the African Union Mission in Somalia (AMISOM), in close partnership with the Intergovernmental Authority on Development, the United Nations and other international partners, stood by Somalia and provided the Parliament, the Government, the Federal Indirect Electoral Implementation Team, the State-Level Indirect Electoral Implementation Team, as well as the independent electoral dispute resolution mechanism, all the support, assistance and advice it could to ensure that the electoral process was conducted in accordance with the approved terms of reference and that its credibility was enhanced by ensuring that allegations of malpractice and other irregularities were objectively, properly and timely addressed, as well as to ensure that attempts by Al-Shabaab to taint and discredit its final outcome did not succeed.

The political environment is one of hope and confidence, as the newly inaugurated Speaker of the House of the People announced the priorities of the national political agenda as being the continuation and completion of the constitutional review, the formation of political parties, the establishment of local Governments, the resumption of dialogue with Somaliland, the strengthening of revenue-collection capacity and the building of State institutions and the enhancement of their capacity to deliver basic essential services to the people. As partners united in a common struggle against violent extremism and destabilization, we, the members of the international community, are called to support the Parliament not only in achieving those goals, but also in enhancing its role as the privileged forum for dialogue, political debate and negotiation, national reconciliation and cohesion, as the rightful representative, the mouthpiece and the legitimate interpreter of the will, aspirations and apprehensions of the people of Somalia for the next four years.

Despite being the result of an electoral process taht fell far short of the cherished one-person, one-vote ideal, the establishment of this Parliament represents progress and displays unique characteristics. After having been highly scrutinized by their own communities, the members of Parliament won the trust of their people when they emerged victorious from an electoral contest in which the majority of 51 delegates voted for each one of them. That feature did not exist in 2012, when only a few elders had the right and power to determine alone who should represent their community and the people of Somalia. Fifteen per cent of the new parliamentarians are youth between 25 and 35 years of age, and 24 per cent of the Parliament is made up of women. Those two social categories represent the majority of the Somali population today. They are the face of the most vibrant and are the most enduring feature of the Somali society.

Many have been exposed to different political, social and cultural environments, which is an asset in itself. If properly harnessed, this new reality has the potential to help Somalia move more swiftly away from its current predicament.

Another important development in the period under consideration is the fact that, despite Al-Shabaab's vow to thwart the process, the parliamentary election took place in all six of the designated electoral centres without any security incidents that could be attributed to Al-Shabaab. That was possible because of the professionalism and close coordination and cooperation that exists between the Somali national security forces and AMISOM, the effectiveness of the plan they put in place, as well as the enhanced and sustained exchange of real time actionable intelligence. That effort is continuing and producing commendable results in other areas of joint endeavour.

The gains accumulated with the successful launch of regional states could be compromised if the current political unease that is witnessed in a good number of those states is not properly tackled and addressed in a timely manner. The continued existence of such tensions has the potential to arouse the appetites of negative armed groups, who normally prey on such convoluted environments, and escalate violence to unexpected and challenging levels.

AMISOM is working hand in hand with the Somali national security forces. It continues to provide a secure environment in which the Somali political process can thrive. Although weakened, Al-Shabaab continues to engage in targeted assassinations, direct and indirect fire, ambushes, reinforced with improvised explosive devices on AMISOM convoys along supply routes, the hurling of grenades, vehicle-borne improvised explosive devices and infiltration across all sectors, including in Mogadishu. Despite logistical, financial and operational challenges, AMISOM continues to support the Somali national security forces' operations, administration and training in its areas of responsibility. Moreover, AMISOM police units are continuing to carry out their mandated tasks in Mogadishu, Baidoa, Kismayo, Beledweyne, Jowhar and Adado. Such activities are taking place with immense sacrifice by the troop- and police-contributing countries and in the context of inadequate and very limited resources.

The reality in the theatre of operations has changed. The enemy is resorting to new tactics that pose new challenges. The need to adjust to those new challenges and overcome the enemy is pressing. The terrorist group continues to maintain control of pockets of territories around the Jubba Valley corridor and along the north-eastern coastline. Their stronghold in those areas has been reinforced by the growing influence and influx of foreign fighters, in large part through neighbouring Yemen. Those territories must be recovered from the enemy, as an integral part of the process for its degradation and eventual defeat.

To that end, the African Union reiterates its call for the deployment of additional forces and key combat and stabilization capabilities in order to enable AMISOM and the Somali national security forces to conduct expanded offensive operations. There is urgency for the United Nations and other members of the international community to provide one-time support to additional forces of up to 4,000 troops in the form of the provision of rations, fuel, transport and medicine for a limited duration, to allow for the conduct of specific military operations as a catalyst for an imminent AMISOM drawdown from Somalia.

It has become abundantly clear to us that, no matter how effective AMISOM may be, there can be no lasting and sustainable peace and security in Somalia unless capable and properly empowered Somali national security forces are in place. We therefore ask that support continue to be provided to the Somali national security forces not only for the upcoming offensive operations, but also in the context of the overall effort of building a comprehensive and capable Somali security apparatus. To that effect, we insist on the need for a better coordinated, complementary and mutually reinforcing partner intervention in the area of security in Somalia. Our individual and dispersed interventions, as much as they are accepted and appreciated, are having limited effect on our joint security effort in the country.

We will continue to join hands with the United Nations in our effort to work closely with our partners in this endeavour. Even so, a comprehensive approach to security is indispensable. That should be anchored on the concurrence of mutually reinforcing factors, such as the presence and the adequate territorial expansion of functioning State institutions, democratic governance, the provision of humanitarian assistance and other essential services to the people, dispute resolution mechanisms, building capable national security forces and preventing and addressing the conditions conducive

to violent extremism and radicalization, which lead to terrorism. That is the best way of guaranteeing sustainable peace and security to Somalia. We recognize that partners, such as the United Kingdom and others, are doing a very commendable job in that regard. We look forward to continue working with them in this area.

We are happy that a suitable solution was found for the payment of stipends to the Burundian contingent serving in AMISOM. Nonetheless, this problem is a reflection of the limited resources and funding that AMISOM is facing. A sustainable, lasting and acceptable solution must be found to ensure that AMISOM is properly funded. We are fighting with our bare hands against an enemy that has acquired expertise to produce explosive devices that are powerful enough to bring down this building. Taking into account the possibility of considering an assessed contribution for the funding of AMISOM has now become very important.

The President: I thank Mr. Madeira for his briefing.

I now give the floor to Ms. Dirie.

Ms. Dirie: It is an honour for me to address the Security Council on the state of women's political representation in Somalia. Because of time constraints, I cannot cover all of the key milestones, achievements, challenges and lessons learned in the 2016 electoral process. However, a document has been distributed.

The Committee of Goodwill Ambassadors, which I have the privilege of chairing, was appointed by the Federal President of Somalia to help women secure 30 per cent of the seats in both houses of Parliament. That was the goal agreed by the country's political leaders in the National Leadership Forum. As in other countries, advancing women's political empowerment in Somalia is a challenging task. Despite the huge contributions that they make to society, women are often excluded from decision-making and leadership roles. In 2012, women were selected for only 14 per cent of the seats in the Federal Parliament. The National Leadership Forum's decision for the 2016 electoral process to reserve a minimum of 30 per cent of the parliamentary seats for women was therefore very encouraging.

To achieve that goal, the Goodwill Ambassadors first carried out a clan-mapping exercise showing the distribution of reserved seats per clan. The detailed mapping schematic has also been attached to my notes, which were just circulated in the Chamber. We then launched an advocacy campaign involving civil society actors and political lobbyists, as well as Federal and state Women's Affairs Ministries, to secure the buy-in of political leaders and clan elders. We received enormous support and encouragement from the United Nations, and from the international community in general, in our quest to realize the 30 per cent goal, and I would like to express my thanks for the partnership and collective efforts of the Somali Federal Government, the National Leadership Forum, the Women's Affairs Ministries, civil society, women activists, the United Nations-African Union Integrated Gender Office, the United Nations Development Programme, UN-Women, the European Union, the United Nations Assistance Mission in Somalia, the Intergovernmental Authority on Development and members of the diplomatic community. Women were elected to 25 per cent of the seats in both houses of the new Parliament, among them my fellow Goodwill Ambassadors. That is a substantial and unprecedented achievement for Somali women and for the society as a whole. We faced numerous challenges and learned important lessons in the course of our work. I would like to mention several of those lessons that should be considered in preparation for the 2020 universal elections.

In the absence of a legally binding provision, the political decision to reserve 30 per cent of the seats for women was extremely difficult to enforce. No one was, or could be, held responsible and accountable for their action or inaction. A secured legal provision is therefore critical to advancing women's political equality. Securing the reserved seats for women relied in large measure on the will of clan elders, who are traditionally opposed to women's political participation. That affected women's ability to secure clan endorsement and to operate freely without threats and intimidation. A massive structural transformation is required to advance women's representation in politics and the democratization process in Somalia.

Throughout the electoral process, women presented a unified position that served as a source of strength. Together with the Goodwill Ambassadors, civil society and the Women's Affairs Ministries, we all worked in a united fashion that had a very positive impact on our campaign. The lack of adequate financial and logistical support posed a significant challenge to women candidates during the campaign period. Furthermore, women were disproportionately affected by election-related corruption and abuses that weakened

their position vis-à-vis the clan elders, the state-level Electoral Implementation Teams and state authorities. Provisions for adequate support and the establishment of a level playing field will be critical to the success of women candidates in the future.

On behalf of Goodwill Ambassadors, I would like to thank the Government of Sweden, current President of the Security Council, and UN-Women, which facilitated my trip to New York.

The President: I thank Ms. Dirie for her briefing.

The representative of Uruguay has asked for the floor to make a statement.

Mr. Rosselli (Uruguay) (*spoke in Spanish*): I should like to begin by thanking Mr. Keating, Mr. Madeira and, in particular, Ms. Dirie for their detailed briefings. I also welcome the presence in the Chamber of Mr. Omer, Minister for Foreign Affairs and Investment Promotion of the Federal Republic of Somalia.

Allow me first to vigorously condemn the suicide attack perpetrated by the Al-Shabaab terrorist group that took place at the Dayah Hotel in Mogadishu this past Wednesday and resulted in dozens of deaths.

At the dawn of a new beginning for Somalia, Uruguay welcomes the establishment of the new Federal Parliament in December 2016 and the election of the Presidents of their respective house. We hope that the process will come to a successful conclusion on 8 February with the election of the new President of Somalia. Uruguay urges that all the necessary measures be taken to ensure a review of the provisional Federal Constitution, which we consider vital for Somalia to become a true constitutional democracy. The support of the United Nations Assistance Mission in Somalia (UNSOM) and the financial assistance of the international community are vital for the timely adoption of the permanent Constitution.

Uruguay recognizes the efforts made to reach the target of 30 per cent of the seats in Parliament for women. Although this time the goal was not achieved, the result has shown a transformation in the representation and political participation of women in Somalia. With such an important precedent, efforts must be redoubled to achieve that goal in 2020, as well as effectively implement the democratic principle of one-person, one-vote.

Security sector reform, in particular the rapid and effective development of the Somali National Army, is vital so that Government security forces, including the police, can assume greater responsibility for peacekeeping and the security and protection of Somali citizens.

Uruguay is very concerned about the reported increase in human rights violations in Somalia. Despite the Somali authorities' important commitment to protect children over the past several years, the detention of children for alleged links to Al-Shabaab continues to be a reason for concern, as does their murder and other violations of their rights, such as their recruitment by various parties, sexual violence, kidnapping, as well as attacks against schools and hospitals. Uruguay urges the Government of Somalia to ensure that children are treated first as victims and that its guiding principles are in the best interests of children and in accordance with international protection norms. The death sentences that were imposed on children in Puntland are unacceptable.

As a sponsor of resolution 2286 (2016), we note with concern that the most recent report (S/2016/1098) of the Secretary-General on children in armed conflict in Somalia indicates that from 2012 to 2016 there were 40 attacks against hospitals in that country. Such attacks, no matter whence they come, are war crimes.

In conclusion, once again, Uruguay recognizes the important work of United Nations Support Office in Somalia, the United Nations Assistance Mission in Somalia and the African Union Mission in Somalia and considers them fundamental in building the Somali State and making progress in the consolidation of peace and lasting stability in the Horn of Africa.

The President: I shall now make a very brief statement in my capacity as the representative of Sweden.

I should like to thank the briefers and to honour the presence of the Minister for Foreign Affairs of Somalia and the representative of civil society, Ms. Dirie.

I would like first to convey our condolences to the Government of Somalia and the Government of Kenya, as well as to the victims' families, for the deplorable terrorist attacks over the past several days.

Sweden welcomes the successful electoral process, and we commend the Somali security forces and the African Union Mission in Somalia (AMISOM) for

having provided a secure environment in which the process could take place. The new Parliament is inclusive: 25 per cent of parliamentarians are women and 16 per cent are under 35-years-old, with half of its members elected for the first time. It is now important that there be no further delays and that the presidential election be held on 8 February, as scheduled, so that a Government can be formed to take peace and State-building efforts forward.

Building a better future for Somalia should benefit from the input of all Somalis. The presence in the Chamber today of Ms. Asha Gelle Dirie is testimony to a vibrant civil society. We hope that the increased representation of women and youth now seen in Parliament will be replicated at every level in the peace and State-building effort. I want to congratulate Ms. Gelle on her leadership in Somalia. I think she is breaking new ground in a way that could also serve as a model for other countries beyond Somalia.

The report (S/2016/1032) before us today also highlights a severe humanitarian situation, which is likely to worsen. Five million people are already suffering from acute food shortages. I call in this open Chamber on all donors to seek in their pockets funds and assistance for the humanitarian response plan and call on Somali authorities to facilitate humanitarian access in order to prevent humanitarian disaster.

Finally, we believe that AMISOM remains crucially important for the stabilization of Somalia. We commend the troop-contributing countries and their soldiers and pay tribute to their efforts and sacrifice. Sweden and the European Union are and remain committed to supporting AMISOM, both financially and politically, but funding gaps must be dealt with. We join the African Union in calling on the international community at large to assist, while recognizing the need to find more sustainable means. However, achieving sustainable peace and stabilization goes beyond AMISOM; the development of a credible and capable Somali national security sector must be a priority within a well-coordinated and comprehensive approach to security.

I now resume my functions as President of the Security Council.

I have the pleasure to give the floor to the Minister for Foreign Affairs of Somalia.

Mr. Omer (Somalia): I want to also join you, Mr. President, and Mr. Michael Keating and Ambassador Madeira in sending our sincere condolences to the Kenyan and Somali families and the military staff and civilians who perished last night in the Juba Valley in a senseless, barbaric and un-Islamic attack. Moreover, it is wrong to use of our children as human bombs. This has happened too often, so let us all condemn it and make sure that it does not happen again.

At the outset, on behalf of the Somali Government, I wish to congratulate the new members of this organ on their election. I commend in particular the Swedish Government on its stewardship and leadership of the Security Council this month.

It is a great honour for me to address the Security Council on the important matter of Somalia's progress and the remaining challenges today. The members of the Security Council, with many other partner nations within the United Nations, continue to play a vital role in our national progress alongside our people and the Government, both multilaterally and bilaterally.

It is important to remember that, since I last addressed the Security Council, in September 2016 (see S/PV.7778), all members have taken the opportunity to visit Somalia and witness our national progress. The members of Security Council met with the President in Mogadishu. That was followed by further high-level visits from many Security Council membes and Members of the United Nations, which serve as the best evidence of constructive engagement, strengthening partnerships and Somalia and Somalis determinedly overcoming the difficult nightmare of the past.

I must stress and reiterate that, in many ways, Somalia has some key remaining challenges to overcome going forward, as Mr. Keating, Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Somalia, made clear in his briefing. But, as he also acknowledged, the overall progress our country is making is tangible, sustainable and historic. The progress I am referring to, and which I will discuss in greater detail, is political, social, economic and security related. In Somalia's case, as in most post-conflict States, those components must go hand in hand for there to be sustainable development. Furthermore, while the term "progress" can be easily open to interpretation according to individual and group expectations, we can safely say that, by all measurements, progress in Somalia is clear and self-evident. Somalis cannot hide from or wish away their

difficult past, as it clearly has impacted on all of us heavily. But there is also no denying our collective ambition to never return to it.

The Federal Government of Somalia and the Somali people, through sacrifice, self-assessment and tough negotiations, have finally set sail in the direction of peace and progress. Somalia is among Africa's first democracies and we are once again in the process of completing our first successful national elections in decades. So far, all parliamentarians from both the Upper and Lower House have been elected by constituents they represent. In turn, they have elected speakers for both institutions, paving the way for the presidential election scheduled for 8 February.

For the first time in history, a transformation has taken place in female political representation, as was underlined by my siste Asha Gelle Dirie. When it comes to participation, an important precedent has been set for women's political mobilization. We are proud to say that we have achieved almost 26 per cent women representation in our Parliament, which is an increase of more than 70 per cent and a substantial improvement from what it was in 2012.

In addition to the increase in female lawmakers, a larger number of young and talented Members of Parliament have been elected, including from the diaspora. While the election was not yet one person, one vote, it is a remarkable improvement over 2012, when 135 elders selected the entire Parliament. The current process of indirect elections allowed a total of 14,025 delegates, selected by traditional elders and representing all groups within society, to vote for competing candidates. More impressive, the voting was not Mogadishu-centered, like in 2012, but took place all over the newly formed regional member states, including Hir-Shabelle, which was finally established.

Following on from the voting, what is most symbolic is how peacefully and quickly titles were transferred and how the Somali people and politicians embraced the spirit and rules of democracy. Where in 2012, the entire process of elections was in the hands of 135 tribal elders guided by an electoral commission, today it is overseenoverseen by a Federal Indirect Electoral Implementation Team at the national level and six state-level indirect electoral implementation teams in the regions, which have been vocal throughout the elections.

Despite the mentioned successes in the electoral process, there were challenges too, which provided us with many valuable lessons for the future. Those challenges, flowing from the very ambition of holding elections in a recovering post-conflict State that has only had an internationally recognized Government since 2012, led to a delay in the electoral process, which will be concluded by 8 February. Among the key reasons for the delay was the process of understanding and implementing an electoral system that was adopted by the Somali Government on the part of the Federal member states and candidates.

Going forward, the process of planning and executing one person, one vote in 2020 must begin immediately. Furthermore, to guide the entire process, we will partner with all stakeholders and complete the constitutional review process, strengthen enabling democratic institutions and ratify and implement the laws that underpin it all, such as the political party laws. It is a fact of history and process that democratization is not easy. It is a marathon in tough terrain rather than a race in a perfectly designed stadium with guiding tracks, perfect lighting and enthusiastic fans. However, we in Somalia are committed to our national development — and hence to governing ourselves fairly and democratically.

Since our previous meeting at the Security Council (see S/PV.7778), security has continued to improve. As I informed members then, I can confidently repeat that, due to the courage and sacrifices of the Somali National Army and the troops of the African Union Mission in Somalia (AMISOM), Al-Shabaab has been defeated militarily. Despite the headlines and the — at times — irresponsible discussions in some quarters of the international media of its resurgence, Al-Shabaab has been reduced to carrying out primarily opportunistic attacks against soft targets and innocent civilians. The most recent example of this was the attack on Wednesday on the Dayah Hotel in Mogadishu, in which innocent people lost their lives and many more were injured because of pointless and cruel violence. While our thoughts and prayers are with all the victims of this and other evil attacks, both in Somalia and across the world, we are winning the war against Al-Shabaab. Many of their leaders either have been killed or have defected to the Government, and their desperate tactics are the best evidence of their diminishing capabilities and moral bankruptcy.

Permanently defeating Al-Shabaab is pertinent to the progress of Somalia and the overall fight against international terrorism. No one is insulated from terrorism, and the violent ending of last year as well as the beginning of this year, in as diverse places as Berlin, Istanbul and Mogadishu, are clear illustrations of this. We are therefore proud and privileged to be working with valued partners, including members of the Security Council, in diverse and effective ways to destroy the last remaining pockets of terror on our soil.

The Somali Government is proud of the collective efforts of the Somali security forces and their partners in AMISOM, which allow the Somali people to live peacefully. I pay my respects and convey the gratitude of my country for their sterling efforts and success, which has come at a deadly price on many occasions. Their sacrifices will never be forgotten, and their memory will spur on our national and regional progress.

Despite the courage of AMISOM soldiers in Somalia, our national ambition is to nurture and develop a well-trained, -equipped and -funded Somali National Army and police force that protects its citizens and safeguards the progress of the nation for the betterment of our people, our neighbours and the world. We are thankful to all partners that are actively assisting us to work towards and realize this fundamental goal.

The fight against international terrorism is difficult and long. This is simply because we are dealing with new phenomena, which include greater use of technology to radicalize people and new techniques of terror, such as misleading young children to blow themselves up. For those present who wish to know about the latest such incident, two young people aged 16 years old blew themselves up in Mogadishu. There is no textbook that teaches us how to deal with this, and therefore we must share knowledge, adapt and devise sustainable and diverse solutions to overcome this evil. In the case of Somalia, we have completed our national countering violent extremism strategy, and we look forward to continuing our partnership with all Member States on this critical issue.

Despite our solid political and socioeconomic ambitions and gains, I would like to reiterate, as I did in my September 2016 presentation to this organ, the importance of the remaining challenges to development in Somalia, such as investment, education, jobs and skills. These critical components of development must accompany the physical security we seek, otherwise it will prove difficult to overcome the challenges of radicalization, illegal migration and the tragedy of wasted talent and lives on the high seas. The Somali Government has adopted a national development plan, which was completed last year, in line with the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. We kindly ask all partners to support the clearly specified Somali priorities set out within it.

I would like to turn your attention, Mr. President, to the deteriorating humanitarian situation in my Somalia, which is poised to worsen as drought conditions extend beyond Puntland and Somaliland to areas in the south. The drought is expected to deepen, as the current rainy season sharply underperformed and it will be another four months before the next rainy season. According to the United Nations, as previously stated, there are now 5 million people facing acute food shortages, including more than 50,000 children who are severely malnourished. We appeal to the Council, the donor community and the public and private sectors to urgently heed the multiple urgent warnings by United Nations specialized agencies and to help us address the pressing lifesaving and livelihood-support needs facing many Somali people, in particular women, children, the internally displaced persons and other vulnerable people. This appeal goes for the entire Horn of Africa, in particular parts of Ethiopia and of Kenya.

In conclusion, this is my third opportunity to address this important organ in my current role. Our Government has achieved many of the goals we set for ourselves in the past two years, but many challenges remain. It has been an honour to work with Council members' Governments on the key issues concerning both Somalia and the wider world, and I would like to thank everyone for their valuable support.

I would also like to stress the fact that the progress of Somalia is more than rhetorical; it is a reality evidenced by every member of the diaspora — and I include myself in this — and their desire to return, in the undefeatable spirit of the Somali people, to achieve progress and prosperity for themselves, their families and their nation. In looking at Somalia, therefore, please continue to see our courageous progress against great odds, our country's wonderful opportunities and untapped potential resources, as well as our determination to never return to the past, but to accelerate — peaceably and purposefully — to a better future.

The President: I now invite Council members to informal consultations to continue our discussion on the subject.

The meeting rose at 11.20 a.m.